

Tell CIA pullout advice to Nixon

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Sun-Times Bureau

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WASHINGTON — The Nixon administration was advised by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1969 that it could immediately withdraw from Vietnam and "all of Southeast Asia would remain just as it is at least for another generation."

Government documents revealed Friday that the CIA offered the following prediction of what would happen if President Nixon, at the start of his administration, had pulled all U.S. troops out of Vietnam and opened the way to a possible Viet Cong take-over of the Saigon government:

"We would lose Laos immediately. Sihanouk would preserve Cambodia by a straddling effort. All of Southeast Asia would remain just as it is at least for another generation.

"Thailand, in particular, would continue to maintain close relations with the U.S. and would seek additional support. Simultaneously, Thailand would make overtures and move toward China and the Soviet Union. It would simply take aid from both sides to preserve its independence.

"North Vietnam would consume itself in Laos and South Vietnam. Only Laos would definitely follow into the Communist orbit."

In totally rejecting the so-called domino theory on which U.S. policy was based in the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the CIA took a position consistent with a long line of estimates dating back to the original U.S. involvement in 1954.

For example, the documents show that on May 25, 1964, the CIA declared in a National Intelligence Estimate that the United States would "retain considerable leverage in South-

Robert McNamara's doubts in 1966 on escalating the war revealed, Page 6.

east Asia even if Laos and South Vietnam came under North Vietnamese control."

The CIA produced the estimate as part of its pessimistic assessment of the value of launching a bombing campaign against North Vietnam. It argued that air attacks were unlikely to break Hanoi's will and carried the danger of escalating the war into a direct confrontation with Communist China and the Soviet Union.

"Retaliatory measures which the North might take in Laos and South Vietnam," the CIA declared, "might make it increasingly difficult for the U.S. to regard its objectives as attainable by limited means. Thus, difficulties of comprehension might increase on both sides as scale of action mounted."

Former President Lyndon B. Johnson rejected the CIA's advice and started sustained bombing in February, 1965.

Similarly, President Nixon disregarded the CIA estimate in 1969 and decided on a slow withdrawal, an expansion of the war into Cambodia and Laos and a partial revival of the bombing of North Vietnam.

On several occasions since coming to office, Mr. Nixon has referred to immediate, total U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia as "precipitate" and the equivalent of "our defeat and humiliation."

In various ways, he has signaled an intention to preserve non-Communist governments in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Instead of pulling out of Vietnam rapidly, Mr. Nixon has withdrawn gradually, to give the South Vietnamese a "reasonable chance" to maintain their present government.

U.S. troop levels were at 540,000 when Mr. Nixon took office. They are scheduled to be down to 184,000 by Dec. 1, close to the end of Mr. Nixon's third year in office. The President has not said when — if ever — U.S. forces will be completely gone from Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Mr. Nixon stoutly denied that the invasions of Cambodia in 1969 and Laos in 1970 constituted expansions of the war or were even related to political conditions in those countries.

In 1969, U.S. troops joined South Vietnamese forces in the invasion, while the Laos incursion was conducted by Vietnamese ground forces supported by U.S. planes and helicopters.

Mr. Nixon defended both actions as efforts to speed the "end of the war" in South Vietnam. Nevertheless, the administration has exhibited interest in preserving the non-Communist character of the governments of Laos and Cambodia.

There has been a massive infusion of military and economic aid to the anti-Communist regime of Lon Nol in Cambodia, and U.S. air power continues to support South Vietnamese and Cambodian army combat operations

The Cambodian operations began on the

heels of Lon Nol's overthrow of Sihanouk, the man the CIA predicted would retain power if the United States left Southeast Asia. The United States did not leave, and Sihanouk fell. In some quarters, his overthrow has been ascribed to the CIA.

In Laos, the United States has continued extensive bombing raids both along the Ho Chi Minh infiltration routes in the southern part of the country and in north Laos near the Plain of Jars.

The north Laos operations — bombing and aid to anti-Communist guerillas — are linked to retention of a neutralist government in Vientiane, the capital.

The government documents, disclosed to The Sun-Times by a number of reliable sources, show the CIA consistently reported that the bombing of North Vietnam was not effective, either in military or political terms.

The CIA's estimates, the documents also reveal, provided the basis for former Defense Sec. Clark Clifford's silent campaign to get the bombing stopped in 1968.

The CIA's Office of National Estimates advanced the case against the bombing in 1965 despite CIA Director John A. McCone's advice that U.S. planes "hit them harder, more frequently, and inflict greater damage."

In an April 2, 1965, memo to Sec. of State Dean Rusk, White House adviser McGeorge Bundy and Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor, McCone argued that Mr. Johnson's decision the previous day to commit U.S. troops to combat would work only "if our air strikes against the north are sufficiently heavy and damaging really to hurt the North Vietnamese."

He warned that a slow escalation of the bombing would open the U.S. government to "increasing pressure" from the press and public opinion to stop the raids.

Then, McCone concluded: "We will find ourselves mired down in combat in the jungle in a military effort that we cannot win, and from which we will have extreme difficulty in extracting ourselves."

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Keeping Secrets in Washington

Isn't it time for the government to declassify documents from World War I?

By William Anderson

Mr. Anderson is The Tribune's national news correspondent.

WASHINGTON—It is easier to make a secret in the federal government than to keep one.

At least 26,000 persons in the Pentagon alone have the legal authority to produce confidential documents. Thousands more in nearly 50 other government agencies—ranging from the Tennessee Valley Authority to the post office—have the same rights.

The federal paper factory has and is grinding out so much secret material that the National Archives measures its deposits of microfilm in cubic feet rather than by volumes.

Even with Congress and the executive branch probing its own product, investigators have so far found only the top of the secret iceberg.

It is known, for example, that some documents from World War I remain classified. Some suspect that papers from the Civil War remain buried under an extremely large legal cloak.

Secrets in Many Warehouses

There are warehouses in and around this city full of volumes of "classified" information from World War II, Korea and Viet Nam, not to mention details of how we developed the weapons for a nuclear war force.

Some of this same information is legally in the possession of contractors all over the United States, at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters in Europe, and in universities and colleges doing research for the government.

In addition, an untold number of Americans, and in some cases, foreigners, have officially been cleared to possess or read top secret matter.

Who knows what and when in and out of the government has been controversial since the birth of the nation. Some of the biggest debates have centered on whether foreign

United States government activities than the American public, and in some cases, its elected leaders.

In earlier periods, classification was a relatively simple affair. Diplomats liked to keep their conversations private. The military was concerned about numbers of troops and their movements.

With the advent of World War II, the expansion of technology and its applications to the weapons of war, secrecy was intensified. Congress appropriated money for many projects kept secret from most members.

The atomic bomb was manufactured in large plants by thousands of people who didn't know what they were working on. Vice President Harry S. Truman was kept in the dark about the bomb until he became President.

Altho most of the people involved in the project were cleared for access to top secret information, a "need to know" rule was applied to keep them from learning all of the details.

Three Types of Classified

It is this "need to know" theory that has much application thruout the government today, even tho the statutes primarily deal with classifying documents as [1] top secret, [2] secret, and [3] confidential.

The essential authority for this kind of legal classifying of papers lies in a document known as Executive Order 10501—an order issued on Nov. 5, 1953, in the first term of the late President Eisenhower.

The order eliminated an old classification known as "restricted" on the grounds that as the lowest grade of secret it was being abused by bureaucrats who wanted to protect individual interests with a legal secret kind of stamp.

This executive order also had a preamble. It read:

"It is essential that the citizens of the United States be informed concerning the activities of their government."

However, it then continues to state that some information should be placed

and graded under secret covers if that information should or could cause:

⊙ Exceptionally grave damage to the United States. Top secret.

⊙ Serious damage to the United States. Secret.

⊙ Prejudicial damage to the United States. Confidential.

The executive order, as "clarified" and amended under the succeeding administrations, from that point on has grown to the size of a small book.

Some of the books distributed thruout the government include a clarification. It reads:

"The attorney general of the United States on April 17, 1954, advised that defense classifications may be interpreted, in proper instances, to include the safeguarding of information and material developed in the course of conduct of foreign relations of the United States whenever it appears that the effect of the unauthorized disclosure of such information or material upon international relations or upon policies being pursued thru diplomatic channels could result in serious damage to the nation. The attorney general further noted that it is a fact that there exists an interrelation between the foreign relations of the United States and the national defense of the United States."

Some of the examples cited for possible classification in this amendment to the executive order were listed as:

⊙ "Intelligence or information relating to intelligence operations which will assist the United States to be better prepared to defend itself against attack or to conduct foreign relations."

⊙ "Political and economic reports containing information, the unauthorized disclosure of which may jeopardize the international relations of the United States or may otherwise affect the national defense."

⊙ "Information received in confidence from officials of a foreign government whenever it appears that the breach of

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Pentagon papers reveal Ike plotted Viet takeover

CHICAGO, June 25—President Eisenhower secretly set out in 1958 to smash the North Vietnamese government and "re-unite" it with the puppet South Vietnam Government under "anti-Communist leadership."

This was revealed in today's Chicago Sun-Times columns, based on official documents acquired by the newspaper.

News of Eisenhower's role came even as the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in neighboring Missouri joined the list of newspapers publishing revelations culled from the so-called Pentagon Papers, the 47-volume report on the origins of the Vietnam war drafted at the behest of Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in the latter days of the Johnson Administration.

High court calls hearing

Widening of the front of newspapers publishing material based on the secret history of deception of the American public came even as the U.S. Supreme Court continued a restraining order barring the New York Times and Washington Post from further publication of the series.

By a 5 to 4 vote, the high court voted to hear the Department of Justice's appeal from lower court orders permitting the series to continue in both papers. The court will hear arguments at 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Voting in the minority—that is, to affirm the lower courts—were Justices Hugo Black, William Brennan, William O. Douglas and Thurgood Marshall.

Sun-Times report

According to the Chicago Sun-Times article, Eisenhower, and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, supported a move to cancel the nationwide Vietnamese elections agreed upon at a 1954 Geneva conference. The move to bar the elections was presumably made by Saigon Prime Minister

Ngo Dinh Diem but was apparently inspired by Washington.

Reason for upsetting the election agreement was a Central Intelligence Agency survey which showed, according to a report ci-



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ted by the paper, that Saigon "almost certainly would not be able to defeat the Communists in country-wide elections."

Later, Eisenhower was to write of the elections that it was almost a certainty that President Ho Chi Minh of North Vietnam would have won 80 percent of the vote if the election were held.

Other disclosures

Disclosures in the Sun-Times report included:

* A CIA report back in August, 1954, when the French were still trying to cling to Vietnam, that the agency did "not believe there would be the dramatic transformation in French policy necessary to win the active loyalty and support of the local population for a South Vietnam government."

* Another CIA document, which reported that "the most

significant particular sentiment of the bulk of the population was an antipathy for the French combined with a high regard for Ho Chi Minh as the symbol of Vietnamese nationalism."

* A report from White House adviser, Michael Forrestal, after a 1963 visit to Vietnam: "No one really knows how many of the 20,000 'Viet Cong' killed last year were only innocent or at least persuadable villagers."

* Contingency planning for the bombing of North Vietnam was completed by mid-June, 1964, but President Johnson held back for the next six months—that is, until the November elections were safely over.

* William Jorden, a former New York Times writer, sent to Vietnam by the White House to discover North Vietnamese infiltration, reported back: "We are unable to document and develop any hard evidence of infiltration."

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch account today published the full text of a memorandum from McNamara to Johnson, dated Oct. 14, 1966, which admitted that the "pacification" program was a "disappointment" and "if anything, goes backward."

The accompanying story was written by Richard Dudman, chief of the newspaper's Washington Bureau, and two other Washington correspondents, Thomas W. Ottenad and James Deakin.

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Nixon Documents Revealed

CIA Advised in '69
U.S. Could Pull Out

This story is derived entirely from information distributed by United Press International and Associated Press.

The Chicago Sun-Times says just as it is at least for another generation. In an article today that the Nixon administration was told by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1969 that it could immediately withdraw from Vietnam and "all of Southeast Asia would remain just as it is at least for another generation."

In another article based on material from secret government documents, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch said yesterday that former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara told President Johnson privately in 1966 that military escalation in North and South Vietnam was not having the desired effect and reported he saw "no reasonable way to bring the war to an end soon."

The Sun-Times, in a copyrighted story in Saturday's editions, says the CIA told Mr. Nixon at the beginning of his administration that withdrawal would result in the immediate loss of Laos.

The newspaper quotes a CIA advisory to the President as saying, Prince "Sihanouk would preserve Cambodia by a straddling effort. All of Southeast Asia would remain

Thailand, in particular, would continue to maintain close relations with the U.S. and would seek additional support. Simultaneously, Thailand would make overtures and move toward China and the Soviet Union. It would simply take aid from both sides to preserve its independence.

"North Vietnam would consume itself in Laos and South Vietnam. Only Laos would definitely follow into the Communist orbit."

The CIA totally rejected "the so-called domino theory on which U.S. policy was based in the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations," the Sun-Times says, and followed a position consistent with a long line of estimates dating back to the original involvement in Vietnam in 1954.